

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS// FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, LE, SY, IS, UR

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN LEBANON

1. BEFORE DEPARTING FOR CAMP DAVID, THE SECRETARY DECIDED THAT HAL SAUNDERS NEED NOT REPEAT NOT TALK TO THE SOVIET CHARGE AS REGARDS THE DETERIORATING LEBANESE SITUATION BUT THAT YOU SHOULD WEAVE INTO YOUR OWN TALKS IN MOSCOW ABOUT CAMP DAVID OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE LEBANESE SITUATION.

2. THE CONJUNCTION OF VARIOUS RECENT EVENTS--RISING ISRAELI CONCERN THAT THE SYRIANS IN LEBANON ARE READY TO DESTROY OR REDUCE THE MILITARY POWER OF THE INDEPENDENT MARONITE LEADERS BY MILITARY MEANS, THE VISIT OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM TO MOSCOW, THE NEW POSITIONING OF SYRIAN ANTIACRAFT ARTILLERY DEFENSES IN LEBANON -- ALL MAKE FOR A TENSE SITUATION.

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3. WE SUGGEST YOU WEAVE IN THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS IN YOUR TALKS WITH THE SOVIETS.

-- THE LEBANESE SITUATION CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE. WE HAVE BEEN MAKING MAJOR AND SUSTAINED EFFORTS WITH LEBANON, SYRIA AND ISRAEL TO URGE RESTRAINT, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT ISRAELI LEADERS ARE EXTREMELY SUSPICIOUS OF AND CONCERNED

BY SYRIAN ACTIVITIES AND ARE IN A MOOD TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED THAN THEY ARE NOW.

-- EACH TIME THE SYRIANS APPEAR TO RESPOND TO PROVOCATIONS AND AMBUSHES, THE RESULTANT PATTERN HAS BEEN A STEADY IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR MILITARY POSITION. THEY ARE NOW DEEPLY EMBEDDED IN PARTS OF THE CHRISTIAN HEARTLAND NORTH OF BEIRUT, AND THERE HAVE BEEN ONE OR TWO PARTICULARLY BRUTAL INCIDENTS RECENTLY. WE HAVE URGED THE SYRIANS TO DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO BRING ABOUT A REAL CEASEFIRE AND A STANDFAST OF SYRIAN FORCES.

-- SOME OF THE INDEPENDENT MARONITE CHRISTIAN LEADERS MAY BE READY TO SPRING A NEW CAMPAIGN OF PROVOCATIONS ON THE SYRIAN FORCES IN EXPECTATION THAT THE SYRIANS WILL RESPOND IN SUCH A HEAVY WAY AS TO INVITE THE ISRAELIS TO COME TO THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CHRISTIANS.

-- IT IS AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS SITUATION, AND WE HOPE THAT MOSCOW WILL DO WHAT IT CAN TO URGE RESTRAINT AND CAUTION UPON THE SYRIANS. FOR OUR PART, WE ARE CONTINUING TO DO OUR BEST TO KEEP ISRAELI CONCERNs UNDER CONTROL. WHAT IS NEEDED IS A PERIOD OF CALM AND REAL CEASEFIRE, SO THAT THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE CONFRONTATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE IN THE PAST TWO

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MONTHS COULD BE DEALT WITH AND SOLUTIONS NEGOTIATED. CHRISTOPHER

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